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Source: *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 35, No. 84 (Dec., 1956), pp. 95-115

Published by: the [Modern Humanities Research Association](#) and [University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies](#)

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Accessed: 14/06/2014 06:59

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Interpolations in the 16th-Century Muscovite Chronicles

NIKOLAY ANDREYEV

I

THE additions in cursive writing (*skoropis'*) in the so-called Synodal MS. of the illuminated Nikon Codex and in the *Tsarstvennaya kniga*¹ long ago attracted the attention of historians,² and no account of the events of the reign of Ivan IV is complete without a reference to these additions, especially to those appearing under the year 1553. The problem of how they occurred however still remains unsolved and the object of conjecture. It is generally agreed that the additions were made by an editor of these semi-official chronicles, which describe the events of the 16th century. But the question is still open as to who the author could have been and when these cursive additions and alterations of the original text of the chronicle, which was written in half-uncials (*poluustav*), were added. Those who have seen the original text are unanimously agreed that the interpolations were written by one and the same hand.³ This, of course, heightens our interest in the question of authorship. Moreover, the interpolations are all the more interesting in that the information which they contain is to be found nowhere else. It is apposite to quote in this place that distinguished authority on Muscovite history, S. F. Platonov. 'The main difficulty [he says] in studying the reign of the Terrible [Ivan IV] and in interpreting his character is not that the whole period and its central figure are complicated, but that there is little material available for study. The Time of Troubles and the great fire of Moscow in 1626 destroyed all Muscovite archives and documents to such an extent that one is forced to study the events of the 16th century from fragmentary remains of the original documents. A biography of Ivan IV would be impossible, because very little is known about him.'⁴

The interpolation under the year 1553 shows clearly the attitude of the influential *élite* in the Muscovite state to the question of the

¹ *Polnoye sobraniye russkikh letopisey* (abbr. P.S.R.L.), St Petersburg, 1906, XIII, 1, 2. Interpolations on pp. 97, 98, 108, 109, 114, 141, 237, 238, 246, 264, 277, 441-9, 452-8, 460-3, 472, 482-4, 486, 487, 489, 491-4, 501, 502, 506, 509, 511, 512, 514, 515, 517-28. The interpolations which are of the greatest interest are on pp. 237-8 and 524-6.

² V. I. Ikonnikov, *Opyt russkoy istoriografii*, II, 2, Kiev, 1908, pp. 1210-70.

³ P.S.R.L., XIII, 2 [Introduction by the editor, S. F. Platonov], p. vii; A. Ye. Presnyakov, *Tsarstvennaya kniga, yego sostav i proiskhozhdeniye*, St Petersburg, 1893, p. 7; D. N. Al'shits, 'Ivan Groznyy, i pripiski k litsevyim svodam yego vremen' (*Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 23, Moscow, 1947, p. 252).

⁴ S. F. Platonov, 'Ivan Groznyy v russkoy istoriografii' (*Russkoye proshloye*, I, Petrograd-Moscow, 1923, p. 3).

succession to the throne—always an important issue in the history of the realm. It gives an idea of the quarrels which arose over this issue and is full of dramatic detail. It is for this reason mainly that it is of value, for many historians⁵ consider that in these quarrels lies the key to the subsequent actions of the tsar, viz. the terror campaign directed against the ‘traitors to the sovereign’, which was to make Ivan IV so widely notorious. The 1553 additions have a distinct subjective bias, and one recognises that they echo the author’s attitude to various personalities mentioned in them. There is, for instance, a very interesting summing-up of the activities of the archpriest of the cathedral of the Annunciation, Sil’vestr, who played such an important part in the early reign of Ivan IV. In the addition under the year 1554 there is an *exposé* of the information obtained by the special commission of investigation under torture from Prince Semyon Lobanov-Rostovsky, whose son Nikita had tried to escape to Lithuania earlier that year and had been seized at Toropets by members of the lesser nobility, *boyarskiye deti*. Lobanov-Rostovsky’s account supplements the picture of the doubts and fluctuations in the loyalty of the boyars over the issue of the succession, and of various boyars’ secret conversations with Prince Vladimir Andreyevich Staritsky, the first cousin of the sovereign. In some cases the reasons for the actions of various individuals mentioned in the chronicle are frequently altered, facts are added and, finally, in several other cases minor editorial changes have been made.⁶

If it were possible to find the answers to the two problems, viz. by whom the interpolations were written and when they were made, it would then be possible to determine to what extent the views of the author were accurate and to what extent his opinions were biased.

Presnyakov, who made a special study of the *Tsarstvennaya kniga* and particularly emphasised the importance of the interpolations, was unable to approach the problem from the right standpoint, because A. I. Sobolevsky, who was then the recognised expert on palaeography, had provided him with an inaccurate dating of the chronicles, which Sobolevsky mistakenly considered to have been

⁵ Among the numerous historians who consider the events of 1553 important for the elucidation of future events, the following should be named: M. P. Pogodin, *Istoriokriticheskiye otryvki*, Moscow, 1846, p. 268; S. M. Solov’yov, *Istoriya Rossii*, II, ‘Obshchestvennaya Pol’za’, ed., cols. 136–40; V. O. Klyuchevsky, *Boyarskaya Duma drevney Rusi*, St Petersburg, 1919, pp. 342–3. S. F. Platonov, *Ivan Groznyy*, Petrograd, 1923, pp. 90–7. Among recent publications, leaving aside specialised monographs for the moment, the following are of interest: *Ocherki istorii SSSR. Period feodalizma. Konets XV—nachalo XVII vv.* Ed. by A. N. Nasonov, L. V. Cherepnin, A. A. Zimin, Moscow, 1955, pp. 298–9; M. T. Florinsky, *Russia*, 2 vols., New York, 1953, I, pp. 190, 199; N. I. Shatagin, *Russkoye gosudarstvo v periyod poloviny XVI veka*, Sverdlovsk, 1941, pp. 118–19.

⁶ Cf. P.S.R.L., XIII, 2, p. 238 note I; Presnyakov, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 20; S. V. Bakhrushin, ‘Izbrannaya rada Ivana Groznogo’ (*Istricheskiye zapiski*, 15, Moscow, 1945, p. 33); Al’shits, *op. cit.*, pp. 269–75.

written during the first half, or even at the end of the 17th century.⁷ But Sobolevsky's conclusions were inconsistent with the nature of the illustrations.⁸ Presnyakov himself fully realised this, and that a detailed account, such as, for instance, that of the tsar's illness in 1553 and the resulting 'troubles' in ruling circles in Moscow, could not have been written down at the end or even the middle of the 17th century,⁹ as 'having been handed down by legend and from memory', but he did not care to contradict Sobolevsky. Likhachov, who shortly afterwards analysed the paper on which the chronicles were written, reached a different conclusion, i.e. that the manuscripts could be dated as having been written during 1566–85, when this kind of paper was widely used, although this type of paper was already in use during the 1550s.¹⁰ Likhachov's conclusions produced a change of mind among specialists. Presnyakov agreed with him. Sobolevsky stuck obstinately to his opinion, which was a habit of his,¹¹ but a solution of the problem was not, for the moment, to be finally established.

When scholars again turned their attention to the interpolations, it was in more recent times, in connection with the intensified study of the reign of Ivan IV in works on the 16th century. In 1945 S. V. Bakhrushin expressed the opinion 'that the additions and re-editing of the chronicles in question were carried out at the behest of the tsar himself' and that it is possible 'to guess the source whence the additional information had come'. It is significant that Bakhrushin recognised the two sources of the unknown editor's works: (1), official documents, and (2), the personal reminiscences of contemporaries and eyewitnesses.¹² In 1947 S. V. Veselovsky, an expert on this period, writing about the events of 1553, expressed the opinion that all 'the corrections, additions and interpolations in the *Tsarstvennaya kniga* were made by one and the same hand and person at a later date: they were written eighteen or twenty years after the tsar's

⁷ Presnyakov, *op. cit.*, p. 7. A. F. Bychkov was of the same opinion, cf. the preface to *P.S.R.L.*, XIII, p. iv.

⁸ F. I. Buslayev, 'Dlya istorii russkoy zhivopisi XVI veka' (*Istoricheskiye ocherki russkoy narodnoy slovesnosti i iskusstva*, ed. D. E. Kozhanchikov, St Petersburg, 1861, vol. II, pp. 308–9).

⁹ Presnyakov, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁰ N. P. Likhachov, *Paleograficheskoye znachenie bumazhnykh vodyannykh znakov*, I, chap. IV, 'Litsevyye letopisty i "Tsarstvennaya kniga"', 1899, pp. CLIV–CLXXXI, 316–17. It is interesting that this paper, of French manufacture, was of the best quality available at this time. Several kings of France including Henri II, Charles IX, Henry III, and Catherine de Medicis and also King Sebastian of Portugal as well as their counsellors and ambassadors used this paper. In Likhachov's opinion 'the interpolations in the *Tsarstvennaya kniga* were written at a time very close to the death of the unhappy Prince Vladimir Andreyevich', i.e. they were written c. 1569.

¹¹ A. Y. Presnyakov, 'Moskovskaya istoricheskaya entsiklopediya XVI veka' (*Izvestiya otdeleniya russkogo yazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk*, St Petersburg, 1900, V, 3, pp. 825–76); *id.* 'Zametka o litsevykh letopisyakh', *ibid.* VI, 1901, pp. 295–304; A. I. Sobolevsky, 'Neskol'ko slov po povodu "Zametki" A. Y. Presnyakova', *ibid.*, pp. 305–11.

¹² Bakhrushin, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–4.

illness of 1553, at the direct instigation of the tsar and with his close participation, and were aimed at justifying the tsar's execution of the Staritsky princes in 1569'. Veselovsky intended to set out the entire question in detail in a 'separate article'.¹³ Unfortunately no such article has appeared (as far as can be ascertained), and it is not known whether Veselovsky wrote such an article before his death. In 1947 and 1948 however D. N. Al'shits published two monographs on this subject.¹⁴

Al'shits attempted to prove that the author of the interpolations was none other than Ivan IV himself. In Al'shits's opinion, the tsar also revised the original text of the Chronicles, aiming primarily at presenting the events of his reign in a light favourable to his own subsequent policies. Al'shits tried very hard to prove that the author of the interpolations purposely gave a distorted account of events. Unwittingly, the reader of his articles comes to believe that the events described either did not happen or happened quite differently.¹⁵ The main weakness in Al'shits's explanation lies in his approach to the problem, which he appears to examine rather superficially, without paying sufficient attention to the peculiarities of the interpolations, particularly of that of 1553. If we turn to the text of the interpolation first of all, we find that it contains the name of a person who was most probably the immediate editor, reviser, and author of the addition: the name is that of the *d'yak* Ivan Mikhaylovich Viskovaty,¹⁶ one of the principal officers of state between 1549 and 1570 and a trusted servant of the tsar almost until the moment of his execution in 1570. It is curious that his name has been mentioned more than once by historians who, in one way or another, have touched on this question,¹⁷ including Al'shits, who correctly states that, according to the interpolation, during the tsar's illness in 1553, the most loyal to the tsar and, one might even say, the hero of the rebuff administered to the rebels, was the well-known statesman of that time, Ivan Mikhaylovich Viskovaty.¹⁸ But, in trying to

¹³ S. V. Veselovsky, 'Posledniye udely v Severo-Vostochnoy Rusi' (*Istoricheskiye zapiski*, An SSSR, 22, 1947, p. 106).

¹⁴ Al'shits, *op. cit.*, and D. N. Al'shits 'Proiskhozhdeniye i osobennosti istochnikov, postavlyayushchikh o boyarskom myatezhe 1553 goda' (*Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 25, 1948, pp. 266-92).

¹⁵ Under the influence of these last four works the *kommentariye* in Ya. S. Lur'ye's *Poslaniya Ivana Groznogo* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1951, pp. 593, 598) were written, and their content is repeated in the cautious notes in J. L. I. Fennell, *The Correspondence between Prince A. M. Kurbsky and Tsar Ivan IV of Russia* (Cambridge, 1955, p. 95).

¹⁶ In the chronicles, Viskovaty is referred to as Ivan Mikhaylov and not Mikhaylovich as is the custom in modern Russian. The suffix *-ich* in the patronymic was at that time granted as a reward, indicating nobility. Cf. Heinrich von Staden, *Aufzeichnungen über den Moskauer Staat*, ed. by F. Epstein, Hamburg, 1930, p. 195. Viskovaty is mentioned as the most probable author of the interpolations in the author's 'Kurbsky's Letters to Vas'yan Muromstsev' (*S.E.E.R.*, XXXIII, 81, 1955, p. 420 note 38).

¹⁷ Presnyakov, *op. cit.*, p. 26. A. Yasinsky 'Moskovskiy gosudarstvennyy arkhiv v XVI veke' (*Universitetskiye izvestiya*, 5 May 1889, Kiev, pp. 23-36).

¹⁸ Al'shits, 'Ivan Groznyy i priipski ...' (*Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 23, Moscow, 1947, p. 286).

prove the tsar's authorship, Al'shits is led astray by his own theories and fails to distinguish the more probable author of the interpolations, declaring that the only facts in favour of Viskovaty's authorship are that he was head of the *Posol'skiy Prikaz* and in charge of the archives. There was no other reason, according to Al'shits, to credit him with the authorship.¹⁹ We shall see later that there were other reasons, and also that the two given by Al'shits were of considerable importance, although not decisive. It is curious that I. I. Smirnov²⁰ came even nearer to solving the riddle, but proceeded only half way in his quest. He was interested in the document which provides us with the other reasons, viz. the so-called 'Affair of the *D'yak* Viskovaty'.²¹ But he did not realise that it is here that we find the key to the problems of dating and authorship which have been already mentioned and a solution of which is the aim of the present article.

II

Before turning to the analysis of the text of the 1553 interpolation, it would be pertinent to devote some attention to *d'yak* I. M. Viskovaty himself. What kind of man was he and what was his outlook? Why should he, in particular, have been connected with these semi-official chronicles? What can be learnt about him from the sources hitherto mentioned?

To quote the opinion of Al'shits, who, without realising it, has added proof to the theory that is diametrically opposed to his own: the author of the interpolations (1) 'must have been alive and at court after 1564' (and, let us add, after 1569, as stated by Veselovsky); (2) 'he was someone with a great deal of authority, and, as far as the editing of compilations was concerned, must have been directly responsible'; (3) 'his political outlook coincided with that of Ivan IV'; (4) 'he was absolutely loyal to the person of the tsar'; (5) 'the editor was someone with a wide political horizon'; (6) 'he was *au fait* with all the important events, both those taking place near the tsar and those in which the latter participated directly, as well as those taking place on the farthest periphery of the state'; (7) 'he was a witness of the taking of Kazan'' (this is definitely born out by the

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 287, note 23.

²⁰ I. I. Smirnov, 'Ivan Groznyy i boyarskiy "myatezh" 1553 goda' (*Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 43, Moscow, 1953, pp. 150-81). Smirnov states that he was not primarily interested in solving the problem of authorship, but considers the account to be 'indubitably authentic'. Cf. p. 158 note.

²¹ Published in *Akty Arkheograficheskoy komissii*, I, no. 238; 'Moskovskie Sobory na yeretikov XVI veka' (*Chteniya Obshchestva istorii i drevnostey Rossiyskikh*, 1847, I); 'Rozyisk ili spisok o bogokhul'nykh strokakh i o sumnenii svyatykh chestnykh ikon diaka Ivana Mikhaylova syna Viskovatogo v leto 7062' (*Chteniya v Imperatorskom Obshchestve istorii i drevnostey pri Moskovskom universitete*, 1858, II). Cf. N. Andreyev, 'O dele d'yaka Viskovatogo' (*Seminarium Kondakovianum*, V, Prague, 1932, pp. 191-242) for all the details of the Viskovaty affair.

many minor corrections to the account of the storming of Kazan'); (8) 'he was familiar with all the details (either from documents or from having been a participant in those events) of the fluctuating loyalty of the boyars in 1553 and of the treachery of Prince Lobanov-Rostovsky, not to mention a whole series of other minor affairs'. Al'shits, having listed the indications by which the author may be recognised, puts the question: 'can we find any one person among the statesmen of the Muscovite realm of that time who are known to us who would fulfil all the indicated conditions?'²² Al'shits was mistaken in his answer, but his list remained sound; the correct answer is to be found by reference to the biography of I. M. Viskovaty, in so far as it is known to us.

The first mention of Viskovaty occurs in 1542, when although he was still only a *pod'yachiy*, he drafted the peace treaty of 19 March 1542 with Poland²³—a very responsible task. Viskovaty's importance is also brought out by the fact that he was among the officials who met the Lithuanian ambassadors: on this occasion, *pod'yachiy* Viskovaty's name is mentioned first in the records, before the other *d'yaks* present, which, in view of the strict rules of precedence governing entries into the archives, shows that already Viskovaty held a position of some authority. It may be concluded, therefore, that Viskovaty started his career as a civil servant a good deal earlier. Probably, taking into consideration the very slow promotion in government service, when all the members had to be fully acquainted with all aspects of their work, he entered the service at the end of the reign of Vasily III. His career received a fresh impetus on 2 January 1549, when, while still a *pod'yachiy*, he was appointed head of the *Posol'skiy Prikaz*. At the end of January 1549 he was made a *d'yak*.²⁴ It is more than doubtful whether the theory is correct that Viskovaty owed his success in his career to the patronage of Aleksey Adashev, whose name is often found in conjunction with that of Viskovaty in diplomatic documents of the 1550s. Adashev's name begins to appear in documents of an official character from 1547 onwards, when he was still a *rynda* (member of the tsar's personal bodyguard). The honorary nature of this position, usually allotted to youths, did not however detract from Adashev's importance as a rising favourite. In the spring of 1549 Adashev was appointed head of the *Chelobitinnyy Prikaz*.²⁵

²² Al'shits, 'Ivan Groznyy i pripiski . . .' (*Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 23, Moscow, 1947, p. 247).

²³ *Sbornik Imperatorskogo russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva* (abbr. *Sbornik*), St Petersburg, 1887, 59, pp. 162–3, 166.

²⁴ For all these details cf. S. A. Belokurov, 'O Posol'skom Prikaze' (*Chleniya v Imperatorskom obshchestve istorii i drevnostey rossyiskikh pri Moskovskom universitete*, Moscow, 1906, III, p. 218).

²⁵ S. O. Shmidt, 'Pravitel'stvennaya deyatel'nost' A. F. Adasheva' (*Uchonyye zapiski Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, Kafedra istorii SSSR* 167, 1954, pp. 34, 35, 41). But in February 1549, 'Adashev had not yet obtained power'. Bakhrushin, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

All this would seem to indicate that Adashev did not as yet participate in the direction of foreign affairs from the *Posol'skiy Prikaz*. For it was in 1549 that the direction of foreign affairs was entrusted to the *Posol'skiy Prikaz*.²⁶ It is difficult to imagine that the tsar would appoint a man of whom he as yet knew little to be head of this important department. Undoubtedly, Viskovaty's gifts had already attracted the attention of the young sovereign. It is easy to see from the lists of appointments in government service (*stateynnye spiski*) how quickly this *d'yak* of undistinguished lineage moved up the ladder of promotion. He played a prominent part in the Muscovite administration, and as he was extremely able, he was, while still a *pod'yachiy*, appointed head of the *Posol'skiy Prikaz*, over whose development and organisation he spared no effort.²⁷ Besides this, it is known that he was invited to court weddings, where only those of high rank or personally known to the tsar had the *entrée*, and that he several times accompanied the tsar on his campaigns and, in particular, on his Kazan' campaign.²⁸ That the tsar valued his talents highly is evident for many reasons. Viskovaty took part in practically all the most important diplomatic negotiations, and his name occurs frequently in the *Posol'skiy Prikaz* documents. At the same time, his name is often mentioned in the *Tsarstvennaya kniga* itself.²⁹ It should be emphasised that apparently, until Adashev's departure for Livonia in May 1560 's *bol'shim*

²⁶ S. A. Belokurov, *op. cit.*, S. O. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 47. It was probably in 1551 that Adashev started to work in the *Posol'skiy Prikaz* after completing the involved Kazan' negotiations. *P.S.R.L.*, XIII, I, p. 167.

²⁷ At the tsar's orders he also took on the administrative duty of collecting taxes in some districts. This task appears to have been entrusted only to him, as his successor did not take it on. Cf. P. A. Sadikov, *Ocherki po istorii oprichniny*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1950, pp. 228-30.

²⁸ Evidently the ecclesiastical sentence of temporary excommunication (*epitemiya*) imposed on Viskovaty had no effect on his secular career, since he was put in charge of the negotiations between 28 April and 1 June 1554 with the Danish ambassadors. Cf. Yu. IV. Shcherbachev, 'Kopengagenskiye Akty, odnosyashchiyesya k russkoy istorii' (*Chteniya Obshchestva istorii i drevnostey rossiyskikh*, 1915, IV, Moscow, pp. 23-38). Few lists (*razryady*) of those invited to court weddings have survived. The list of guests whose names are given (as opposed to officials, who were invited by virtue of their rank) usually starts with the *d'yaks*. Viskovaty is listed among the seated guests at the wedding of Tsar Simeon of Kazan', on 5 November 1554 (*Drevnyaya rossiyskaya viuliofika*, XIII, p. 62), at that of Prince I. D. Bel'sky (*ibid.*, p. 75), and at the second wedding of Prince Vladimir Andreyevich Staritsky, first cousin to the tsar (*ibid.*, p. 81).

It is interesting, when evaluating the high position of trust held by Viskovaty, to take into account the petition of 1598—twenty-eight years after his death—presented by the *yaselnichiy* Mikhail Ignat'yevich Tatishchev, who points out, among other things, that the *pechatnik*, Ivan Mikhaylovich Viskovaty, was always served at the tsar's table, i.e. was invited into the more or less intimate circle of Ivan IV, to which, of course, an ordinary *d'yak* would scarcely have had access. Sadikov, *op. cit.*, p. 310. That Viskovaty occupied a position of trust in the immediate *entourage* of the tsar is confirmed by the evidence of two ex-members of the *oprichnina*, at one time Muscovite advisers on Livonia, J. Tanse and E. Kruse, who wrote that 'Ivan IV loved his chancellor Ivan Viskovaty as he loved himself'. See 'Poslaniye Ioganna Tanse i Eberta Kruse' (*Russkii istoricheskiy zhurnal*, 8, Petrograd, p. 51).

N. P. Likhachov, *Razryadnyye d'yaki XVI veka. Opyt istoricheskogo issledovaniya*, St Petersburg, 1888, p. 258.

²⁹ *Sbornik*, vols. 59, 71, 129, and indices; also cf. the index of the *Tsarstvennaya kniga*.

naryadom' (with a train of heavy artillery), the *Tsarstvennaya kniga* was compiled under his supervision.³⁰ It is no coincidence that the Swedish envoys at the negotiations of 1554, in their official reply, probably repeating the formula used by the Russian delegates, say 'that the tsar had ordered them to receive his close and trusted counselors—the *okol'nichiy* Aleksey Feodorovich Adashev and the *d'yak* Ivan Mikhaylov'.³¹ Certainly, from 1552–4 onwards, Viskovaty constantly, in the capacity of a *dumnyy d'yak* (one of the secretaries to, and, *ipso facto*, a permanent member of the Council of Boyars) participated in the meetings of the Council of Boyars,³² and also in those of the Privy Council, which was the real hub of the Muscovite government.

An even clearer pointer to the position held by the *d'yak* is the story of Viskovaty's doubts as to the canonical content of the new icons, painted for the cathedral of the Annunciation under the supervision of the presbyter Sil'vestr after the great fire of Moscow in June 1547. Viskovaty, seven months after the tsar's illness in 1553, discloses his doubts to the metropolitan in the presence of the tsar. As is shown by an analysis of the surviving documents dealing with these doubts, which were debated at the Council (*Sobor*) of 1553–4, Viskovaty was attempting to deal a blow at Sil'vestr himself. He brought the accusation, a very serious one at that time, against the presbyter, of instability in the faith, in that he had allowed Latin, i.e. West European, details to infiltrate Russian iconography and he charged him with contact with the recently condemned (1553), free-thinkers or 'heretics', Matvey Bashkin and the ex-abbot of the Troitsko-Sergiyevskaya Lavra, Artemy. Although Viskovaty was, for the most part, justified in his iconographic doubts, the Council and, principally, its chairman, the Metropolitan Makary, sided with Sil'vestr, who, realising the danger of his own position, came forward with a very heated counter-accusation. Viskovaty, faced with overwhelmingly strong opponents, was forced to renounce his theories. However, for an epoch, when all religious deviations were savagely persecuted, Viskovaty, thanks to his position, was able to get off comparatively lightly. This considerable rebuff administered by the Church in the presence of the tsar does not seem to have had any effect on Viskovaty's career. Obviously the tsar held the *d'yak* in considerable esteem and did not

³⁰ Cf. S. O. Shmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 48, 51.

³¹ *Sbornik*, 129, p. 32.

It is interesting to recall the judgement of B. Russow, the compiler of the Livonian Chronicle, who, on the whole, was very hostile to the Russians. He says: 'Ivan Mikhaylovich Viskovaty was an excellent man. There was no one like him at that time in Moscow. His mind and his [diplomatic] art greatly amazed foreign ambassadors, in view of the fact that he was a Muscovite with no education.' Cf. 'Baltazar Ryussov, Livonskaya khronika 1584 g.' (*Sbornik materialov i statey po istorii Pribaltitskogo kraya*, III, 1886, p. 186).

³² Sadikov, *op. cit.*, p. 229; N. P. Likhachov, 'Dumnoye dvoryanstvo v boyarskoy dume XVI veka' (*Sbornik genealogicheskogo obshchestva*, VI, St Petersburg, 1890).

allow him to be overmuch humiliated.³³ This episode shows Viskovaty's extreme distaste of innovations and Western influences, which entered Russia by way of Novgorod and Pskov. Sil'vestr himself came from Novgorod, according to Kurbsky's *History of the Grand Duke of Moscow*.³⁴ It is interesting to note that this struggle of Viskovaty's against Western influence agrees with the evidence of the German *oprichnik*, Heinrich von Staden, that Viskovaty disliked Catholics and Protestants from Western Europe.³⁵ In other words, from this 'affair', it becomes evident that Viskovaty was a man of deep religious culture, of an analytical turn of mind, and of considerable audacity of thought and action, and that he opposed the new spirit embodied by Sil'vestr. Thus we have the picture of one of those servants of the tsar who helped to create and strengthen Muscovite central authority from the beginning of the 16th century onwards, to counterbalance, as it were, the Muscovite boyars who struggled against the autocratic tendencies of their sovereign. It is of people of similar social standing, situation, and attitude as Viskovaty, and probably with him in mind, that Kurbsky wrote: 'the Grand Duke trusts them greatly, he does not choose them from the nobility or the gentry, but mostly from the sons of the clergy, or from the common people.'³⁶

In view of Viskovaty's personality and activities, it is not surprising that the *d'yak* held the post of head of the *Posol'skiy Prikaz* until

³³ For the complete details of the affair, cf. N. Andreyev, *op. cit.* Smirnov gives a similar account of the attempt to attack Sil'vestr (cf. Smirnov, *op. cit.*). It is obvious from the lists of guests invited to the court weddings that the *epitemiya* (religious penance) did not affect Viskovaty's career (cf. note 28). It is apposite to mention here that the whole of this episode, which has attracted a great deal of attention from historians, is sometimes retailed in the strangest way. P. N. Milyukov, gives an accurate account of the affair in his *Ocherki po istorii russkoy kultury*, II, 2, Paris 1937, pp. 499-501, but in his article 'Pervopechatnik Ivan Fedorov' (*Vremennik Obshchestva družey russkoy knigi*, IV, Paris, 1938, p. 32) adduces the information that 'the council condemned Viskovaty, Bashkin, and Artemy for praising the German faith' (*sic!*). Ye. F. Shmurlo (cf. his *Kurs russkoy istorii*, II, 2, Prague, 1934, pp. 350-3) considers Viskovaty to have been a *starover* (*sic!*), or Old Believer, and an iconoclast (*sic!*). V. V. Zenkovsky's remarks in his *Istoriya russkoy filosofii*, I, Paris, 1948, p. 41, also stand in need of correction. 'The sad fate of a certain (*sic!*) Viskovaty should not be forgotten, he was a political figure (a clerk of Ivan IV) and took part, with an unusual exhibition of feeling, in the quarrel over a new trend in icon-painting.' Viskovaty indeed suffered an undeservedly harsh fate, but his execution was not the result of his ideas on iconography. Again, N. Ye. Mneva in her 'Moskovskaya zhivopis' XVI veka' (*Istoriya russkogo iskusstva*, edited by I. Ye. Grabar', V. S. Kemenov, and V. N. Lazarev, vol. III, Moscow, 1955) gives a competent summary of the affair, but the sentence on p. 582, viz. 'Viskovaty's views were condemned as heretical' has no basis in fact. On the contrary, the Metropolitan Makary emphasised that Viskovaty was not a heretic, for if he had been, his fate would have been quite different.

³⁴ *Russkaya Istoricheskaya Biblioteka* (abbr. *R.I.B.*), XXXI, St Petersburg, 1914, col. 169.

³⁵ Von Staden, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³⁶ *R.I.B.*, XXXI, col. 221. Ivan IV had every reason to trust Viskovaty, whose political views were of a conservative nature, with complete confidence in hierarchical autocracy; Viskovaty's political outlook is admirably expressed in his own phrase: 'I am horror-struck when the small is equated with the great. If everything becomes equal, then no distinctions in rank will remain.' 'Rozysk.' (*Chteniya* . . . 1858, II, p. 8.)

August 1562, and that from 9 February 1561, he also became *pechatnik* (chancellor) of Ivan IV's government administration. Apparently he was also appointed Keeper of the Great Seal, a newly established post.³⁷ This too points to the tsar's complete confidence in him. Viskovaty's replacement in the *Posol'skiy Prikaz* by *d'yak* Andrey Vasil'yev occurred only because Viskovaty had to go on an important diplomatic mission to Denmark, whence he returned in November 1563.³⁸

On his return, Viskovaty, still *pechatnik* and *dumnyy d'yak* at the same time, apparently advised the tsar on diplomatic affairs. He participated in the *Zemskiy Sobor* of 1566, at which he took up an independent position on the question of continuing the war in Livonia. Viskovaty was against continuing the war, but although his opinion did not coincide with the tsar's, this in no way altered his official status. In passing, it should be noted that the development of the Livonian campaign fully justified Viskovaty's forebodings. The latter, with his diplomatic training, had already seen in 1566 the possibility of an anti-Muscovite coalition coming into being. This detail affords a further illustration of Viskovaty's loyal service to the state and a proof that he was not one of the tsar's 'yes-men'.³⁹

It appears to have been at this time, i.e. after his appointment as Keeper of the Great Seal, that Viskovaty took charge of the State Archives. That Viskovaty undoubtedly was in charge of them is borne out by the inventory of the State Archives.⁴⁰ From this inventory it is clear that Viskovaty, in his capacity of keeper of the archives, had

³⁷ Sadikov, *op. cit.*, p. 310. The Great Seal had only just been instituted by the tsar (*P.S.R.L.*, XIII, 2, p. 331). Cf. N. P. Likhachov 'Delo o priyezde Antoniia Possevina' (*Letopis' zanyatiy Arkheograficheskoy komissii*, XI, St Petersburg, 1903, pp. 251-2). Likhachov gives the following description of the Great Seal: 'on the obverse is a double-headed eagle bearing a mounted man on a shield and on the reverse a double-headed eagle bearing a shield, on which a unicorn is depicted. On both sides three concentric rings contain the full titles of the sovereign.' It is interesting that the unicorn was considered to be the personal emblem of Ivan IV. The smaller seal, belonging to the tsar's father, Grand-Duke Vasily III, was entrusted 'to a second confidant of the tsar, and his constant henchman, Ugrim L'vov Pivov'. Cf. Sadikov, *op. cit.*, p. III.

³⁸ Belokurov, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 106; *R.I.B.*, III, col. 191; *P.S.R.L.*, XIII, 2, p. 343. The Great Seal (cf. footnote 37) is appended to the bull of 1562, kept in the Danish State Archives. Possibly Viskovaty himself carried this *gramota*, sealed with the Great Seal, when he travelled to Denmark in that year. The tsar attached particular importance to relations with Denmark, in view of the latter's friendly attitude to the Muscovite state. Probably this is why Viskovaty was included in the mission to Denmark as being the expert on Muscovite foreign policy and international problems. Cf. I. I. Polosin's introductory article to Von Staden, *O Moskve Ivana Groznogo*, Moscow, 1925, p. 15.

³⁹ N. P. Likhachov, *Razryadnyye d'yaki*, p. 258. *Akty, odnosyashchiyesya k istorii Zemskikh soborov*, edited by Yu. V. Got'ye, Moscow, 1920. Cf. pp. 5-16 for the Council of 1566 and pp. 8-9 for Viskovaty's opinion.

⁴⁰ *Akty Arkheograficheskoy ekspeditsii*, I, St Petersburg, 1836. Cf. Bakhrushin, *op. cit.*, p. 32; Shmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 51; Yasinsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-4, 33-4. It must be emphasised here that, judging by the inventories, all the most important documents of the Muscovite realm were kept in the State Archives, viz. those dealing with foreign and internal policy and those dealing with political or religious inquiries. This points to the tsar's complete confidence in Viskovaty, who was thus in a position in which he had full knowledge of all state affairs.

compiled a detailed description of their contents. If we compare this fact with the generally accepted premise that the *Tsarstvennaya kniga* was compiled under the supervision of Adashev, who was also at one time in charge of the State Archives, then it is natural to conclude that Adashev's work was continued by his successor, the loyal, intimate, and trusted councillor of the tsar, *d'yak* Viskovaty. It is interesting that the German *oprichnik*, Albert Schlichting, refers to Viskovaty in his memoirs as 'the secretary of the tyrant' (i.e. of Ivan IV).⁴¹ Does not this definition of Viskovaty's position by an author who, however inaccurate he may have been, had considerable first-hand knowledge of court life, give a fairly clear idea of *d'yak* Viskovaty's work at this period?

It must be stressed that, when disgrace overtook Viskovaty, it apparently happened very suddenly. As late as 12 July 1570 he is mentioned as an official⁴² and on 25 July he was executed.⁴³

⁴¹ A. Malein, *Novoye izvestiye o Rossii vremeni Ivana Groznogo*, Leningrad, 1934, p. 62. It is Albert Schlichting's tales of the cruelty of Ivan IV which probably have had most effect on Western readers of the 16th century. Their echo is to be found in the writings of Alessandro Gvagnini Veronensis, 'Moscoviae Descriptio' and of Paul Oderboru, 'Joannis Basilidis Magni Moscoviae Ducis Vita' (*Historiae Ruthenicae scriptores exteri saeculi XVI*, I-II, ed. A. V. Starchesky, St Petersburg, 1841-2). The most complete summary of the existing information about Schlichting is provided by Ye. F. Shmurlo (*Rossiya i Italiya*, II, 2, St Petersburg, 1913, pp. 232, 233, 235, 250-5). It is interesting that the Italian Giovanni Tedaldi, who visited Russia, condemned the exaggerations in Gvagnini's texts and considered that the reports of the tsar's cruelty spread by Lithuanians and Poles were also exaggerated. Cf. Ye. Shmurlo, *Izvestiya Giovanni Tedaldi o Rossii vremen Ivana Groznogo*, St Petersburg, 1891. But even if Schlichting's account is embellished by sadistic exaggerations, this nevertheless does not do away with the fact of the executions or nullify the undoubted cruelty of the tsar himself, although it must be remembered that his cruelty was not extraordinary for the 16th century. On the other hand naive and uncritical monographs such as that of V. N. Shevyakov, 'K voprosu ob oprichnine pri Ivane IV' (*Voprosy istorii*, 9, Moscow, 1956, pp. 71-77) are useless for the study of Ivan IV's policies.

⁴² Belokurov, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁴³ The date of Viskovaty's execution is given by everyone, from Karamzin to contemporary historians, as 25 July 1570 (cf. *Ocherki istorii SSSR*, Moscow, 1955, p. 45), because Schlichting, who witnessed the execution and noted down its gruesome details, mentions 'St James's day' (cf. Malein, *op. cit.*, p. 46). But Belokurov (*op. cit.*, p. 30), without giving reasons, assigns the execution to September-November 1570. There is another St James's day which falls in the period indicated by Belokurov, viz. 9 October, O.S. This saint's day is celebrated by the Orthodox Church. Schlichting however refers to the Catholic St James's day: 'quite recently, in July, the tsar executed his chancellor' (i.e. Viskovaty). It is possible that Belokurov was surprised by such a very short time elapsing between Viskovaty's holding a position of authority and his execution. On the other hand, it is possible that Viskovaty suddenly found himself incriminated in the web of the inquiry into treasonable dealings with the king of Poland over the surrender of Novgorod and Pskov. These inquiries had been collecting evidence for some time, and as Viskovaty was also accused of corresponding with the Turks and Crimean Tartars, with the result that the latter raided Astrakhan in 1569, it may have seemed that the case against him was complete and that consequently there was no cause for delaying his execution.

That an investigation into 'the traitorous dealings of 1570' (with the king of Poland) actually took place is born out by Schlichting and by the inventory book of the *Posol'skiy Prikaz* (*Perepisnaya kniga posol'skogo prikaza 1626 goda*) which describes the 'investigation' (cf. N. M. Karamzin, *Istoriya gosudarstva rossiyskogo*, ed. Eimerling, IX, St Petersburg, 1843, note 299, p. 66-7). An echo of this inquiry is also to be found in the instructions given to the Russian ambassadors who were dispatched to Poland in 1571 (*Sbornik*, 71, 1892, pp. 786-7). Viskovaty however according to Schlichting's testimony denied these accusations at the place of execution. It is difficult to conceive of Viskovaty as a traitor, although possibly

The violent change in the tsar's attitude to Viskovaty after the latter's unhappy end is worthy of remark. It is illustrated by Ivan IV's famous letter to the Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery in 1572, in which Viskovaty, under the angry pen of the tsar, suddenly becomes, hardly justifiably, a transgressor of ecclesiastical custom.⁴⁴ An important detail, for it shows to what an extreme of rage the tsar had been carried away in his attitude to his distinguished servant and collaborator.

III

What evidence is there to be found in the interpolation of 1553, the most extensive addition to the original text, in support of the theory that Viskovaty was the author?

The interpolation is headed: 'On the Tsar's illness.'⁴⁵ From the beginning it is in sharp contrast with the usual rather stereotyped text of the *Tsarstvennaya kniga*, and the treatment of the subject shows the author to be an experienced and knowledgeable politician and an ardent advocate of the Orthodox faith. The author makes the point that the taking of Kazan' was a victory for Orthodoxy, to the greater glory of the name of Christ and to the exaltation of 'the Christian Realm of Russia', causing confusion to the heathen (of Kazan' and Astrakhan') and striking terror into the hearts of the non-Orthodox peoples of the Crimea and Lithuania and of the Germans. It also

he would have been capable of warning the inhabitants of Novgorod that Ivan IV was preparing a 'terror campaign' directed against them. Although Viskovaty did not much care for the Novgorod 'spirit', he was level-headed and did not consider mass executions to be in the interests of the state, for we know that Viskovaty had several times interfered, much to the displeasure of the tsar, on behalf of boyars sentenced to death (cf. Sadikov, *op. cit.*, p. 36). However the Novgorod Chronicle states that the descent of the tsar on the town was totally unexpected, *P.S.R.L.*, III, p. 253 *et seq.* In any case, it is obvious that the accusation that Viskovaty virtually encouraged the Turks and Tartars to attack Astrakhan was unfounded, for the Muscovite government was well aware that fighting in that area was unavoidable. (Cf. Sadikov, 'Pokhod tatar i turok na Astrakhan' v 1569 godu' (*Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 22, Moscow, 1947, p. 142 *et seq.*)).

In connection with Viskovaty's execution, we may mention that, apparently shortly before his disgrace, he was involved in a scandal with one of the most prominent members of the *oprichnina*, Prince Vasily Tyoemkin-Rostovsky and also with the *dumnyy d'yak*, Vasily Yakovlevich Shchelkalov. Tyoemkin-Rostovsky was awarded the large sum of 600 roubles, but instead received the village of Khrabtovo and twenty-one hamlets from Viskovaty for 'an imputation touching his honour', and Shchelkalov, also for the same reason, was awarded 200 roubles, instead of which Viskovaty gave him part of his estates. These two incidents were most probably connected. At Viskovaty's execution, Shchelkalov read the accusation and struck him three times about the head with a whip. Tyoemkin-Rostovsky was also present. But most eloquent of all is the fact that Shchelkalov received Viskovaty's estate on 6 April 1571 (cf. Sadikov, *Ocherki po istorii oprichniny*, pp. 151-4). Possibly Shchelkalov, formerly a *d'yak* of the *Razboynyy Prikaz* played some part in disgracing Viskovaty in the eyes of the tsar.

⁴⁴ D. S. Likhachov, 'Poslaniye Groznogo v Kirillo-Belozerskiy monastyr' 1573 goda' (*Trudy Otdela drevnerusskoy literatury*, VIII, Moscow, 1951, p. 368).

⁴⁵ *P.S.R.L.*, XIII, 2, p. 522. Despite Al'shits's curious remarks, in 'Proiskhozhdeniye i osobennosti . . .' (*Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 25, pp. 274 *et seq.*), the tsar's illness is mentioned both in the original text of the *Tsarstvennaya kniga*, in Ivan's own letter to Kurbsky (cf. *Poslaniya Ivana Groznogo*, p. 39) and by Kurbsky, *R.I.B.*, XXXI, col. 206-7.

confounded the Evil One, but for the sins of the Christians God suffered the following to come to pass, viz. the tsar had gone to have the 'newly-born tsarevich' Dmitry christened at the Troytsko-Sergiyevskaya Lavra, 'and he had ordered the boyars, in his absence, to deliberate on the affairs of Kazan' [how best to pacify the Kazan' area] and to go into the question of *kormleniye*, [reforms in provincial government]; but, 'being weary after such great efforts and work', they concentrated all their attention on the question of economic and administrative reform in provincial government and postponed the discussion of the affairs of Kazan'. Meanwhile however an anti-Russian rising started there. 'This was the Christians' first tribulation.' After this, on 11 March, the tsar became very ill. 'Already he hardly recognised those around him' and many thought that 'he was approaching his end'. At that moment Ivan Mikhaylov, *d'yak* of the tsar and grand-duke 'reminded the tsar of his will, which 'the sovereign always had ready'; and when the open 'testament' had been signed that same *d'yak* started to say to the tsar that it was absolutely necessary for Prince Vladimir Andreyevich and the boyars to swear allegiance. That evening, seven boyar members of the Privy Council and the *d'yak* Ivan Mikhaylov took the oath of allegiance. Of the other members of the Privy Council, the boyar Prince D. I. Kurl'yatev and the treasurer Nikita Funikov, pleaded indisposition and did not swear allegiance; but rumour had it that they were in contact with Princess Yevfrosiniya and her son Prince Vladimir Staritsky, as they did not wish Dmitry to rule because of his youth. At the same time, the boyar Prince D. F. Paletsky, who had already sworn allegiance and whose daughter was married to the tsar's brother, Prince Yuri Vasil'yevich, also got in touch with the Staritskys on the pretext that he wished to obtain an appanage for his son-in-law and daughter and promised that they would not oppose the candidature of Prince Vladimir. The same evening, the *dumnyye dvoryane* (members of the Council of Boyars), A. F. Adashev and I. Vishnyakov swore allegiance. At the same time Prince Vladimir Andreyevich and his mother 'gathered together their *deti boyarskiye*' and started to distribute money to them. The boyars, presumably those who had already sworn allegiance, considered this a not very happy gesture and said as much to the Staritskys, which the latter resented. This put the boyars on their guard against them and they would not allow Prince Vladimir Andreyevich into the presence of the tsar.

Here we obviously have the evidence of an eyewitness passing on what he had seen and what he had heard. The account is factual, logical, and completely plausible. This part of the account discloses a sound understanding of life and intrigues in boyar circles, and, at

the same time, gives an explanation of the motives for the actions of the various people concerned.

Further on we find this well-known description of Sil'vestr.

At that time there was in the church of the Annunciation, which stands at the entrance of the tsar's palace, a certain priest called Sil'vestr, born in Novgorod. This priest was in great favour with the sovereign and was his adviser and counsellor in spiritual matters, and was all-powerful. Everybody obeyed him and nobody dared to oppose him on account of the tsar's favour towards him. He gave orders to the metropolitan and the bishops and the archimandrites and the abbots and the monks and the priests and the boyars and the *d'yaks* and the employees of the secretariats and the military commanders and members of the gentry and everybody else. To put it baldly, he directed both spiritual and temporal affairs, and nobody dared say or do anything against his orders and he was in complete command of both spheres, spiritual and temporal, as if he were tsar and metropolitan, only he had not the name or the appearance or the throne of the metropolitan or the tsar. He was simply a priest, but much respected by everybody, and he and his advisers were in complete command.⁴⁶

Obviously, this description is exaggerated, but it is written forcibly and discloses a feeling of deep personal resentment against Sil'vestr and also, in part, against the metropolitan, and even against the tsar, who had given so much authority to Sil'vestr. One cannot help remembering the deep insult and humiliation inflicted on Viskovaty at the Council of 1553-4, when he suffered so much at the hands of Sil'vestr and the Metropolitan Makary, and also, indirectly, of the tsar. They had not accepted either the historical or the religious validity of the *d'yak's* reasonable criticisms of the innovations which Sil'vestr, as a Novgorodian, had introduced into the iconography of the Orthodox stronghold of Moscow. When the interpolation was written Sil'vestr was no longer in Moscow. But remembering 'those times', the author could not refrain from the bitter remark that the priest ordered everybody about, the tsar and the metropolitan included, and gave directions to everybody, including the *d'yaks*. This Viskovaty remembered well, for he had had to recant his views and do church penance for three years. In the 16th century this was no light matter.

It is difficult to imagine that the tsar himself could have written such a description of Sil'vestr, for what is really being said here is that Sil'vestr owed his omnipotence only to the favour of the tsar. Ivan, in his correspondence with Kurbsky, puts a different emphasis

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* That the author of the interpolation has correctly interpreted Sil'vestr's role at that time is born out by a recently discovered fragment of an early 17th-century chronicle which states 'at that time there was a priest Sil'vestr who ruled the Russian land'. Shmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

on Sil'vestr's role, by calling him 'the thief of power'.⁴⁷ If we recall various foreigners' comments on Viskovaty, who, according to them, dared to plead with the tsar to stop his executions of the boyars,⁴⁸ then such a description as occurs here of Sil'vestr, who by that time was already in disgrace, is completely in accord with Viskovaty's manner. It is, as it were, a lyrical digression on the part of the *d'yak* from the main subject of the interpolation. The account continues with an elucidation of events during the illness of the tsar:

This Sil'vestr was the adviser, and a great favourite of Prince Vladimir Andreyevich and his mother Princess Yefrosiniya.

Sil'vestr started to argue with the boyars:

Why do you not let Prince Vladimir go to the tsar? His cousin wishes more good to the tsar than you boyars do.

But the boyars answered that they had sworn allegiance to the tsar and 'to his son, the tsarevich Prince Dmitry', and were acting in this way 'in order to safeguard their authority'.

And from then onwards there was enmity between the boyars and Sil'vestr and his patrons (i.e. the Staritsky family).⁴⁹

This account of the relationships between the *dramatis personae* rings very true. Here the various attitudes of the boyars to the question of the succession are set out clearly and soberly, very far in tone from the blustering invective which Ivan IV uses in his correspondence with Kurbsky. Even Sil'vestr's connection with the Staritsky family is told simply and not as an accusation. A hint is dropped that the Staritsky family were to some extent under an obligation to Sil'vestr for his defence of them before the tsar.

The account goes on to deal with the events of 12 March. In the morning the tsar summoned all the boyars and requested them to swear allegiance to Dmitry, and, as he was very ill, ordered them to take the oath in the presence of the boyar members of the Privy Council. Prince I. M. Shuysky then said that it was impossible to swear allegiance to the sovereign, except in the sovereign's presence, and 'in front of whom are we to swear allegiance'?

Aleksey Adashev's father, *okolnichiy* Feodor Grigor'yevich Adashev, said 'we swear allegiance to thee, Sire, and to thy son the tsarevich Prince Dmitry', contriving at the same time to emphasise that he had no intention of serving the tsarevich's uncles, the Zakharins.

⁴⁷ Fennell, *op. cit.*, p. 89. The literal translation is 'taking the splendour of our power from us'. It is impossible to agree with Bakhrushin and Al'shits, who see many points of resemblance in the attitude of the author of the interpolations and of the tsar towards Sil'vestr. Bakhrushin, *op. cit.*, Al'shits, *op. cit.*,

⁴⁸ Malein, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁴⁹ *P.S.R.L.*, XIII, 2, p. 524.

Thy son, Sire, is still in swaddling clothes, and we shall be ruled by the Zakharins, Daniil and his relations, and we have already suffered much from the boyars during thy minority.⁵⁰

This is a very interesting detail which completely contradicts Ivan IV's interpretation of events as stated in his correspondence with Kurbsky. For it becomes apparent, in spite of the generally accepted opinion, that Feodor Adashev did not declare himself opposed to the dynasty, but merely objected to the idea of the country's being ruled, in view of the presumptive tsar's extreme youth, by his maternal relations.

F. G. Adashev apparently expressed the thought which was uppermost in all their minds.⁵¹

And there was great trouble and noise and much debate among the boyars, for they did not wish to serve a babe.

Those boyars who had sworn allegiance tried to persuade those who had not to do so, but they were accused in their turn of wishing to rule:

And there was much quarrelling among the boyars, and shouts and much noise and cursing.

The tsar then made three short addresses. The first was to the opposition.

If you do not swear allegiance to my son Dmitry, that means you have some other sovereign, but you have often sworn to me that you would never seek any other sovereigns but ourselves.

The tsar then ordered them to take the oath: 'I order you to serve my son Dmitry and not the Zakharins', and commended the matter to their own conscience. The second address was to the loyal boyars who had already sworn allegiance. The tsar requested them, if he should die, not to allow the opposition to destroy his heir, but to flee with him to a foreign land. The tsar's third address was to the Zakharins:

And you, the Zakharins, why are you so downcast, or are you hoping that the boyars may spare you? The boyars will discard you first of all. You must die for my son and for his mother, and you must not allow the boyars to insult my wife.

Here again we find the most interesting details, obviously furnished by the same witness of these events, for only an eyewitness could have

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Poslaniya Ivana Groznogo*, pp. 39-40. It is surely incorrect to interpret this openly expressed opinion as evidence of a 'plot', as Al'shits, Smirnov and Bakhrushin do. And the interpretation of the events of March 1553, given on pp. 289-99 of the *Ocherki istorii SSSR*, most unjustifiably exaggerates the facts in the interpolation.

noticed the Zakharins quailing in face of the boyar opposition. But the firmness of the tsar cowed the boyars, and they went into the next room (*perednyaya izba*) to take the oath. The tsar sent

Prince V. I. Vorotynsky, with several others of his boyars to receive the oath of allegiance, and sent his *d'yak* Ivan Mikhaylov with the cross. And the boyars started to kiss the cross and to take the oath and Prince V. I. Vorotynsky stood by the cross and the *d'yak* Ivan Mikhaylov held cross.

After this there follows an account of a quarrel between Prince I. I. Pronsky-Turuntay and Prince Vorotynsky, and of the rumours, passed on later to the tsar, of talk on the same lines by other boyars, viz. Prince Pyotr Shchenyatev, Prince Ivan Pronsky, Prince Semyon Rostovsky, and Prince D. I. Nemoy.⁵²

Then we have the episode of the bond of allegiance⁵³ of Prince Vladimir Andreyevich Staritsky, who at first had been unwilling to take the oath. Then the tsar threatened him:

I do not know what will happen to you. I am not interested.

And turning to his loyal boyars,

I am unable to do anything, but let your deeds be in the spirit of your oath.

The loyal boyars started to persuade Prince Vladimir Andreyevich 'and foremost among them were Prince Vladimir Vorotynsky and *d'yak* Ivan Mikhaylov'. After a sharp exchange of opinions, the loyal boyars started to threaten Prince Vladimir Andreyevich that:

if he did not kiss the cross and take the oath he would never leave that place. . . . And with great difficulty they forced him to kiss the cross, and he kissed the cross unwillingly.⁵⁴

This then is the account of the events in the palace. As is apparent, it is indubitably the work of an eyewitness, but not of the tsar, who was very ill. The existence of a bond of allegiance, which was demanded of Prince Vladimir Andreyevich again in 1554, shows that the description of the event is accurate, and all the hesitations of the boyars are very plausible.⁵⁵

The interpolation of 1553 ends with the episode of the visit of Princess Yefrosiniya. The tsar sent Prince D. F. Paletsky and his *d'yak* Ivan Mikhaylov to the princess so that they might append the princely seal to Vladimir Andreyevich's bond of allegiance:

⁵² *Idem*.

⁵³ Published in *Sobraniye gosudarstvennikh gramot i dogovorov*, I, No. 167, pp. 460-1.

⁵⁴ *P.S.R.L.*, XIII, 2, p. 526.

⁵⁵ I. I. Smirnov gives a very convincing account of this part of the episode. Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 173-9.

and they visited the princess three times, and she could scarcely bring herself to order that the seal should be appended, but said: 'What kind of bond is it, if it is an unwilling one?' and made much talk and uttered many curses. And from this time there was great enmity between the sovereign and Prince Vladimir Andreyevich, and among the boyars there was confusion and turbulence; and heavy days came upon the realm.⁵⁶

In this interpolation, *d'yak* Viskovaty is mentioned seven times and really plays the part of the hero. It is clear that the interpolation was either composed and based on his story or written by him personally. It would appear that the second supposition is the correct one, because the technical directions for the binders are written in the same hand as the interpolation: and, for instance, a miniature is crossed out which mistakenly depicts Ivan IV instead of the tsar of Kazan'.⁵⁷ Al'shits⁵⁸ drew the wrong conclusion from this detail, explaining that only the tsar himself could have done this (for anybody else to do it would be *lèse-majesté*), but this was definitely a draft copy of a chronicle in process of compilation and, of course, in matters like this the editor always has the last word.

The interpolation of 1553 then is no flight of fancy or distortion of events. Instead, these are seen with the eyes of a participant, almost certainly *d'yak* Viskovaty, who, although at one time humbled by Sil'vestr, was most loyal in his adherence to the idea of an Orthodox and autocratic Muscovite state. Viskovaty, of course, would take into account that sooner or later the tsar would see the text of the chronicle and therefore, probably, could not afford to tamper with details of fact (such as names, addresses, rumours, sequence of events), and still less invent events which had never happened.

It is obvious that Viskovaty, an experienced diplomat and a practised courtier, would never have risked adding anything to the chronicles which could have been taken as an accusation of Prince Vladimir Andreyevich. On the other hand, if the interpolations had been written by someone else, they could hardly have been added later than 1570, when Viskovaty was executed; for too much space has been devoted to the portrayal of the *d'yak* as a loyal servant of the tsar. It is possible that the tsar, after the execution of the Staritsky family, allowed Viskovaty to make use of official documents in the compilation of the chronicle, for it was in this way that the documentary interpolation of 1554 (on the affair of Prince Lobanov-

⁵⁶ *P.S.R.L.*, XIII, 2, p. 526. The role of Princess Yefrosiniya, of which an accurate account is given in the interpolation is clearly born out by the contents of the second and third bonds of allegiance, to which Prince Vladimir Andreyevich had to subscribe in April and May 1554. Cf. *Sobraniye gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogorov*, I, No. 168, pp. 462-4; No. 169, pp. 465-8.

⁵⁷ Presnyakov, *op. cit.*, p. 8, note 10.

⁵⁸ Al'shits, 'Pripiski . . .' (*Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 23, Moscow, 1947, p. 267).

Rostovsky) in the Synodal MS. of the Nikon Codex found its way into the chronicle. But another explanation is also feasible. It is simply that Viskovaty was a participant in the inquiry⁵⁹ and had included the interpolation in the chronicle, recalling, in connection with the execution of the Staritsky family, one of the original episodes in the troubles among the boyars. It would seem absolutely incredible that the tsar himself should review the semi-official chronicle in order to do this. In this case he would also have deleted the flattering remarks in the *Tsarstvennaya kniga* about Prince Andrey Kurbsky and Aleksey Adashev, whom he equally hated.⁶⁰ But the tsar, as in several other cases,⁶¹ did not make a habit of concerning himself with such minor details and simply gave his approval to the main idea of the work.

IV

When could the interpolations have been added? It seems probable that they were written during the time that elapsed between the execution of the Staritsky family and the disgrace of Viskovaty, i.e. between the first quarter of 1569 and July 1570, in which month Viskovaty is mentioned for the last time as still occupying an official position. Veselovsky attributes the interpolations to 1571-3.⁶² They could hardly have been made before the death of Prince Vladimir Andreyevich; for he was a relative of the tsar, and whatever differences may have existed between the two, these would not have found their way into the semi-official chronicle. All information about him and everything gleaned from proceedings against 'traitors to the tsar' would have been in safe-keeping in the State Archives. But Prince Vladimir Andreyevich was a person of importance. As late as 6 October 1567, he sat, together with the tsar, in the Council of Boyars.⁶³ In November of the same year, during a campaign, he admitted to the tsar to having plotted with Prince Mstislavsky against him. The tsar postponed the campaign, and together with the Tsarevich Ivan and Prince Vladimir Andreyevich hurriedly made his way, avoiding Moscow, to the Aleksandrovsкая Sloboda and

⁵⁹ *P.S.R.L.*, XIII, 2, p. 238, note 1.

⁶⁰ Kurbsky always remained a source of great irritation to the tsar, and it is not surprising that in the instructions given to the envoys in connection with the execution of Viskovaty, the death of the latter was linked with the treachery of Prince Andrey. Cf. fn. 43.

It is interesting that, in the presence of the Polish envoys at the tsar's banquet in 1570, the court jester made the most offensive remarks about Kurbsky, which is proof of the extreme anger felt by the tsar towards his former 'close friend' (cf. *Rossiya i Italia*, II, p. 250). In Russian diplomatic documents covering the period 1564-71, there are repeated instructions to collect information about Kurbsky, and to demand that he should be surrendered (cf. *Sbornik*, 71, index).

⁶¹ N. Andreyev, 'Ivan Grozny i ikonopis' XVIogo veka' (*Annales de l'Institut Kondakov*, X, *Mélanges A. A. Vasiliev*, Prague, 1938, pp. 185-200).

⁶² Veselovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁶³ Belokurov, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

started investigations. These resulted in the liquidation of almost the entire Staritsky family.⁶⁴

In examining the contents of the interpolations, Ivan IV's statements in his correspondence with Kurbsky should be treated with the greatest caution, particularly those relating to Prince Vladimir. Ivan's manner of dealing with facts is arbitrary in the extreme and he arranges them to suit his own convenience. The interpolations in the illuminated Nikon Codex are of a completely different nature. Al'shits⁶⁵ and Bakhrushin⁶⁶ have pointed out various similarities (factual, not stylistic) in these interpolations and in various expressions in the tsar's epistles. But these similarities, which often do not exist, e.g. the account of Sil'vestr, do not mean that the author was one and the same person—they simply mean that the tsar and Viskovaty made use of the same documents from the State Archives, which, as is well known, were several times consulted by the tsar⁶⁷ and known to Viskovaty in his capacity of keeper of the archives. Besides this, as appears from the correspondence between Ivan IV and Vasily Gryaznoy (while the latter was a prisoner in the Crimea), there remained in Moscow an exact copy (written on *stolbtsy*, 'rolls') of the letters.⁶⁸ It is not outside the bounds of possibility that copies were kept of the tsar's letters to Kurbsky. In that case, Viskovaty would have known and included in the interpolations those events which the tsar mentioned in his answers to Kurbsky.

The other additions or corrections undoubtedly dealt with periods when Viskovaty already worked in the central Moscow administration before 1542, and probably, if he was not a participant in the events described, he at least knew a great deal about them. Thus, for instance, in the *Tsarstvennaya kniga* there are accounts of the following, viz. the murder in the Duma, in 1543, of F. S. Vorontsov by the Shuyskys and their advisers;⁶⁹ the behaviour of the military commanders during the raid of Emin-Girey in 1544;⁷⁰ the slanders of *d'yak* Vasily Zakharov-Gnil'yov in 1546;⁷¹ the troubles in Moscow and the murder of Prince U. V. Glinksky in 1547;⁷² and, in the Synodal MS. of the Nikon Codex under the year 1538, the murder of Prince I. V. Ovchina-Obolensky by the Shuyskys;⁷³ under 1539, the

⁶⁴ Sadikov, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–2, 34. Had the interpolations been written after Viskovaty's death, the marriage of one of the daughters of Prince Vladimir Andreyevich to Duke Magnus could hardly not have been mentioned. Since the wedding was first projected in 1570 this again points to the interpolations breaking off with Viskovaty's death and to his authorship. Cf. D. Tsvetayev, 'Maria Vladimirovna i Magnus Datskiy' (*Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*, 1878, III, pp. 57–85).

⁶⁵ Al'shits, 'Pripiski . . .' (*Istoricheskiye zapiski*, 23, Moscow, 1947, pp. 269–73).

⁶⁶ Bakhrushin, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁶⁷ *Akty arkheologicheskoy ekspeditsii*, I, pp. 347 et seq.

⁶⁸ P. A. Sadikov, 'Tsar' i oprichnik' (*Veka*, I, Petrograd, 1924).

⁶⁹ P.S.R.L., XIII, 2, pp. 443, 444.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 448–9, 532.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 455–7, 532.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 445.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 141.

arrest of Prince I. F. Bel'sky and the murder of his supporters by the Shuyskys;⁷⁴ and under 1542, the attack on the Kremlin by the Shuyskys.⁷⁵ Bakhrushin⁷⁶ admits that more facts are given in the interpolations in the chronicles than in the references to these same events in Ivan IV's letters.

In the light of the cumulative evidence advanced in this article it would appear reasonable to infer that the real author of the interpolations and the editor of these semi-official chronicles was the *d'yak* Ivan Mikhaylovich Viskovaty, that attentive observer of the events of his day, whose truthfulness and audacity were remarked on by his contemporaries. Because of these qualities of mind, the information which he provides us on a scantily documented period is of the greatest value.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Bakhrushin, *op. cit.*, p. 33.